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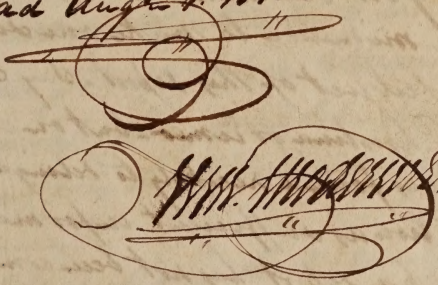
Report on the history of Whaling
in the South Sea Islands.

Read Augt 1. 1818.



× And here I think it necessary to remark that there have already been two reports on this very same Mission already laid before this Society - the one by Mr Morgan the other by Mr Saunders - It was at first my determination to make one single island the subject of this report - say Tongataboo - St Christina, or Eimeo - but on examination it was found necessary to relinquish this determination, as sufficient information as to make up a report has not been communicated concerning the state of the Mission in these islands independently of Otaheite w.h is the principal island - All that we shall attempt then will be to state a few facts not contained in the two former reports - for much interesting information is omitted - the reason of it is, because it has already been before society -

It is design^d to state briefly a few facts respecting the rise, progress & present state of the mission to the S. Sea Islands, which was not compris^d in my last report. These facts have been selected principally from Brown's hist. of Missions, & from some late reports forwarded from the Missionary Society in London.

Scarcely was the Missionary Society instituted in London in 1795, when it resolv^d without delay to commence its operations by a mission to the S. Sea Islands. With this view they began to raise subscriptions, to examine Select Missionaries, who came forward with alacrity & zeal, to make preparations for their distant voyage, & their settlem^t in the places of their destination. In Augt. 96 that is, one

year after the first organization of this Society 29 Missionaries, many of whom had families, embarkd at London on board the Duff, a vessel ownd by the Society & commanded by Capt Jas Wilson, who cheerfully came forward with an offer of his services on this interesting occasion. They were detaind at least a month at Portsmouth, waiting on the convoy; but they at length finally sailed from England in the month of Septr after an agreeable passage of about 7 weeks, arrivd at Rio Janeiro. Having laid in such stores as were necessary, they proceeded, after encountering a most awful & tremendous storm, in March 97, after a voyage of between 5 & 6 months they arrivd at Otaheite, the principal island. On the arrival of the Missionaries, they were welcomed by every possible demonstration of joy, every effort was made by the natives to render their situation comfortable.

Of the appalling superstition & deplorable licentiousness of this people you

have heard from your last reporter—

We therefore proceed to state that the Missionaries had not been many days on the island, before they attempted an address on the subject of religion, employing one or two Europeans who were residents, as their interpreters— the people listen.d with great attention, & many declar.d their determination to throw away the Gods that c.d neither see, nor hear & worship the God of England— Capt.n Wilson who seems to have been a most excellent man, after establishing Missionary in Tongataboo & St. Christina, & after touching at Canton arriv.d in England in July 1798— Sanguine as had been the hopes of the Missionary Society, at the departure of the Duff, they were now elevated beyond all measure on her return— this feeling pervaded the whole C.n world— a day of thanksgiving being appointed by the Society for the return of the Duff & the promising aspect

of the Mission, Dr Haweis, one of the preach-
ers on the occasion, drew a most splendid
& fascinating picture of the success with
wh God had crown'd the undertaking - the
Dr concludes by observing "that nothing
can appear more promising than the be-
ginning of our labours in these isles of the
sea - the fields indeed appear ripe for
harvest - they regard us as beings of a su-
perior order - they hear us in silent awe -
& they seem ready to embrace our message
as soon as we are able to communicate
it to them - Do not your hearts burn
within you at the tidings you have
heard, joining in one vast burst of
praise & adoration with angels & arch-
angels in singing, worthy is the Lamb that
was slain to receive power & riches & wis-
dom & strength & honour & glory & blessing for
ever" - Animated by their own sanguine
hopes, the Missionary Society determined to
lose no time in prosecuting a work they
had so successfully begun - & ere long speedily
they pass'd a resolution to undertake an-
other voyage to the Pacific ocean, in order

to a spirit to increase the No. of Missionaries already there & of planting the Gospel in other islands - Such was the energy & zeal manifested on this occasion that within little more than 3 months from the time this resolution was passed the preparations for the voyage were completed & the ship ready to sail - before the close of Dec.r the Duff sailed on her second voyage, under the command of Capt.n Robson, with 29 Missionaries on board, the Rev.d Mr. Howell as superintendent of the Mission -

Hitherto the Society has beheld its operations crowned with success even beyond the expectations of its most sanguine members - but now the sky grew dark - the clouds began to gather - & the storm burst at once in raging fury - The Duff had not left England two months before she was captured by a French Privateer - the Missionaries were treated with the most extreme cruelty - overwhelmed with grief & horror they stood gazing on one another as helpless objects of commiseration - incapable of making one consolatory reflection for their

mutual comfort, & sunk almost into a state of mental torpor - unable to reconcile their present disastrous situation, with the gracious superintending providence of God & ignorant of what severer trials they might yet be called upon to suffer - they were at length conducted below deck to the place where the sailors slept - In this uncomfortable situation they had to spend their nights - they now began to learn the value of water by the painful experience of the want of it - such as in England they would not have employed to wash their hands, was now deemed valuable to quench their thirst - the sailors also plundered them of what little property any of them possessed - The treatment so savage, was wholly unknown to the commander of the privateer, indeed when he was informed of it, he ordered restitution of the property to be made - this transaction lengthened the enmity of the sailors against them, which they did not fail to manifest in future, as far as was in their power -

As the commander of the privateer & his officers became acquainted with the character of the Missionaries &

the nature of their undertaking, they alleviated to the utmost in their power, the horrors of their captivity, & were disposd to shew them every indulgence - When the instructions of the Missionary Society were communicated to the Commander, he seemd to feel exceedingly, & affirmd that had he known who they were, & the cause in wch they were embarkd he wd sooner have given 500£. out of his own pocket, than to have met with them - but now he said the laws of his country, & the claims of his officers & men, compelld him to act as he did -

For some time the Missionaries knew not wt might be their destiny - As it was natl to persons in their situation, hope & fear, distrust & confidence, alternately prevaild - In genl most of them were enabled to cast their cares on God, but yet on some occasions, they seem to have been torn with anxiety & agitated with the most tumultuous, conflicting passions - their capture affordes a trial for their Missionary temper, it must be acknowledgd that the character of some of them did not appear in the most

favourable light - Sev.l manifested an impatient discontented & refractory spirit for want of all subordination - however within three weeks after the capture of the Duff, they arrived at Monte Video - Being now ~~[illegible]~~ in a foreign land, where they had no opportunity of misconduct, they were impatient to leave it as speedily as possible - Every scheme however which they formed for this purpose was successively frustrated, but length the prospect of their removal seemed in a great measure closed - They had early formed some expectations of being able to redeem the Duff to proceed on their voyage - they soon found that this desirable object cd not be attained unless by the prompt payment of hard cash, a thing which in their circumstances it was impossible to accomplish - Several of the Shipwrights now formed the idea of visiting Otaheite, & endeavouring to plant Christianity in that benighted country, but it was also found necessary to relinquish this plan - They next made an attempt to purchase a small brig, after a great deal of trouble in contracting for her, they considered the bargain as in a manner concluded - Most of

the Missionaries now expressed their willingness to prosecute their voyage to the South Sea Islands, but as the season was thought to be too far advanced for this purpose, some offered to go to the cape of Good Hope, some to Sierra Leone, while others chose to return to England - but in a day, or two the whole of this arrangement was unexpectedly frustrated for notwithstanding the bargain they had made the vessel was sold to a Portugese Merchant - the Missionaries were now reduced to the utmost perplexity, for an order was issued by the Spanish viceroy to make them all prisoners, if they did not leave the country within a very few days - Such was the distress to which they were reduced when the Commander of the privateer succeeded in procuring them a passage to Rio Janeiro, at the same time generously advanced them seven hundred dollars on account of the Missionary society to provide them in stores for their voyage - In a short time they got every thing ready for their departure, after an unpleasant passage of one month, they began to flatter themselves with the prospect of soon entering the harbor of Rio Janeiro when they were alarmed by the sight of a fleet of ships, one of which

bore down upon them - they had soon indeed the satisfaction of beholding her hoist Portugese colours, but they proved no protection to them - for as the Merch.t had purchas.d the brig without her having been regularly condemn.d she had likewise been chargeable with some illicit acts of smuggling, his vessel was now captur.d by his own countrymen - the Missionaries were however set at liberty on their arrival at Lisbon - they lost no time in procuring a passage to England where most of them arriv.d at the middle of Oct.r after an absence of nearly ten months, in the course of w.ch as their trials, so their mercies had been neither few nor small -

I have been thus particular in this part of the History because it has been wholly omitted in both the reports w.ch have been read before this society - ~~in the further progress of this report it is designed to relate only such facts as have not before been adverted to -~~

We proceed now to state some thing concerning the Missionaries who were first sent out - these men appear to have been indefatigable in their labours - they paid early attention to the study of the Language, & made every possible effort to preach the everlasting Gospel - keeping in mind the object for w.ch they came to this benighted region, early in 98 they drew up an address, in w.ch they pointed

out the object of their mission, the advantages that would result from the civilizating of the natives, & also exhorted them in a most spiritual manner, to desist from the dreadful practice of murdering their own offspring. this exhortation produced but a temporary effect - many of the natives became inflam. exceedingly against the Missionaries. In consequence of a war breaking out, it was deem. advisable by a majority of the Off. to abandon the island for the present & return to P. Jackson.

Seven however, relying on the protection of God, determined to remain even amidst all the dangers which they knew they must inevitably be exposed to. By determination they continued for two months landing all the things necessary to dispense them from so large an undertaking as the preaching of the Gospel at this peculiar crisis - the event however proved that the natives had no intention of injuring either the persons or property of the Missionaries - to their very great joy soon after this period 6 Missionaries arrived from England. They now for the first time began to ingratiate themselves with the natives, & with considerable attention, but mostly generally the natives view them with a jealous eye. Shew little, or no regard to their customs

12. tion - the Missionaries make much com-
plaint of the refractory disposition of the
children - they wd submit to no restraint
were most daringly impious -

By the 10th of July 1815 Pomarre
the King had made such progress in the
English language as to write a short letter to
the directors of the Missionary Society - this man
seems to have been at this period exceedingly
averse to hear religious instruction he said
he did not believe a word that was spoken
on the subject of religion - In the year 1808
the missionaries were much more encouraged than
they had been at any preceding period - many they
had reason to believe were brought to the true
instrumentality from natives taken into the
glorious light of the Gospel - One seaman in
particular after his change was highly useful
to his comrades, being instrumental in many
hopes in bringing them to a knowledge of the
truth as it is in Jesus - but we proceed to a
more advanced period of this mission when it
appears that the nos of those who have entered
1825. their names as the professed disciples of Christ
amounted to 362 in the single island of Eimeo
the Scholars to 600, or 700 among whom were
many persons of consequence - Some of the

chiefs in Otaheite, observing the rapid increase
of the praying people as they styled them, fearing
that in process of time, idolatry would be utterly
overthrown, formed a resolution by one sudden
blow to destroy the rising sect. To effect this devil-
ish the idolatrous chiefs who had been previ-
ously rivals, & enemies to one another, conceal-
ed in a plan to fall on the new converts on
a certain night & to exterminate them alto-
gether. But some of the parties being rather
dilatory, & secret information having happily
been given to the people a few minutes before
the time, they were enabled to get on board their
canoes, & wait for Pomare, when they daily arrived
the next morning. The disappointed chiefs, re-
proaching each other for neglect & dealing to
mind their ancient animosities, fell on one
another. A bloody Civil War, especially of those
who first concerted the mischief, soon ensued,
& a large portion of their country laid waste.
But out of all this evil God was pleased to bring
good. When the hopes of all were nearly exhaus-
ted, then it pleased him to evince, that the power
by which their schemes were frustrated were
divine. The principal priest in Otaheite,
openly renounced heathenism. He publickly
committed his idol to the flames. Many
others followed his example, so that idolatry

his pres^t a universal shock, shatters to its very foundations. Some of the opposing chiefs with the priests & their followers endeavour to prop up the fabric, but their efforts only tend to accelerate its fall.

The Missionaries under date of Octo. 21. 1812. write in the following words "Our prospects are brighten^g & our hearts encour^g by an event w^h you will, no doubt, with us deem of great importance in itself, portending a happy result of our missionary labours, the event to w^h we allude is the conversion of king Pomare to Christianity, a circumstance w^h no doubt will cause your hearts & the hearts of all the true friends of G^d who may hear of it to rejoice. On the 18^th of July he came to us, & offer^d himself a candidate for baptism, declaring it his fix^d purpose to cleave to the true God & regularly us to pray for him. Much interesting conversation took place on this occasion, too tedious to be related at large. however we must mention some of it. He said he had been endeavouring to persuade the two principal chiefs of the leeward islands, to take the same step he was taking, but that they were deter-

min^rs to cleave to Satan, but as for himself
if no one else would embrace the G^d religion
he would as he desired to be happy after death
& to be saved in the judgment day - the Missiona-
ries informed him that it was customary
at the much pleased with his conversation but
believing him to be a weak convert, yet
thought prudent to delay his baptism till
he should evince his sincerity by his future
conduct, to which he readily assented, but
desired immediately to build a house for
public worship - the Missionaries had the
happiness to see him entirely leave his idols
even when at a distance from them he regularly
observed the Sabbath, employed every effort to
persuade others around him to abandon idol-
atry & to embrace the Gospel of Christ -

In many parts of Tahiti & Eimeo prayer
meetings have been established without any know-
ledge or interference of the Missionaries & attended
these prayer meetings soon attracted obser-
vation, many mocked & derided - whilst
others, both old & young, joined them & agreed
to cast away their Gods, & worship the only
living & true God - The Sabbath schools are
well attended - but much complaint is
made of the want of books - It is remarkable
of one of the converts a young man that

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as long as the state of his health allow'd. His attendance on the Sabbath school & the diff^t meetings for worship & instruction was highly exemplary. He was likewise very diligent in the use of secret prayer often retiring to a bush as long as he was able to go. & when confin'd to the bed of death or hearing the people passing to school & to worship, he w^d often say "My feet cannot go, but my heart goes with you." He knew he was a sinner, but he knew also that J. C. came into the world to save sinners, & the knowledge of this remov'd him from the fear of death.

The Missionaries complain much of ill health. Some of our people say they were lamenting with tears in their eyes that most of their teachers were laid up & disabled by sickness & w^d probably be quickly be remov'd from them by death, & then save the poor natives, Alas! w^t will become of us. so de-
1815. sirous are they of receiving instruction that no persons even of the greatest & influence & respectability come past & make stake up their residence in the neighborhood of the Missionaries for the express purpose of attending the means of instruction.

Death is cutting down these Missionaries one by one, while the calls for in-

struction on the part of the natives is daily
increasing - the Br write that the circumstan-
ces of the natives, call loudly for the establish-
mt of three, or four missionary stations, inclu-
ding as many Lafe schools - they therefore
intreat the directors of the society to take this
thing into consideration, wh they say is the
earnest request of hundreds of those poor, delu-
ded islanders - A delay in this matter may
be of pernicious consequence to the mission - a
mission wh the Lo has been pleas to bless so
abundantly, notwithstanding all former
discouragemts & disappointmts

The Revd Mr Marsden in a letter to
the secretary of the society in London - says "I re-
joice exceedingly that the labours of our missi-
onaries are at length crowned with such wonder-
ful success - Nothing can be more gratifying to
the religious world in gen: but more particular-
ly to us, on this side the globe - they have their
way now plainly open - The natives in the
Society islands have literally cast their Gods into
the fire - the harvest is truly plentious, but
the Labourers are few - I think there will be
little idolatry remaining in a short time in
these islands, so many believe the word, &
are turnd to the Lord - I am persuaded more
is effected than was ever known in by the

warmest advocate of the Mission in this limited time - Mr. Haddy is 20 years for so great a work! The glory of the Lord is now risen upon these heathen. They begin to see his salvation - Pomare wrote like an Apostle - His heart appears to be deeply engaged in the work. He is a most sincere friend to the cause - This Mission had many enemies, & the character of the Missionaries was much traduced, but their adversaries must now be silent - the work of conversion is so deep & genuine that the Gospel I doubt not will spread among the natives, even if there were no Europeans with them -

We will now conclude this report with an extract from Mr. Brown's history of missions - The mission to the South Sea Islands, as it has been attended with little or no success in that quarter of the globe it has been a powerful mean of promoting the interests of Christianity in other parts of the world, particularly in heathen lands. Eliot & Mayhew, the Danes, the Moravians & the Baptists have all engaged in missionary undertakings & most of them with considerable appearances of success - But their operations never awakened the Christian world from the lethargy into which it had

fallen - Individuals were interested & delighted with their exertions, but the great body of profess^d Chr^s scarcely ever heard of them, or their labours - It was not till the Missionary society was form^d - It was not till the magnificent mission to the S. Sea islands was undertaken, the splendours of wh dazzled the eyes of mankind, that the Chr^n world was arous^d from its slumbers - Then a gen^l concern was excited throughout Christendom for the conversion of the heathen. Old establishm^ts were revis^d & at least were supported with more vigour & prosecuted with fresh zeal - New institutions were form^d - as for the propagation of the Gospel at home & abroad, some of wh have already been crown^d with extensive success, while others promise a yet more abundant harvest - In short, a new impulse appears to be given to the operations of the Chr^n world, which we think may be traced in no inconsiderable degree to the splendour & magnificence of the Mission to the S. Sea Islands -

Aug^t 1. 1818 -